



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## HUMAN SENTIMENT WITH REGARD TO A FUTURE LIFE.

The American Branch of the Society for Psychical Research has recently issued an interesting *questionnaire* (printed below) with a view to determining the feelings with which the possibility of a future life is actually regarded at the present day. The inquiry has arisen naturally out of the Society's work, since it must, of course, be of primary importance for it to know precisely the emotional bias which may at present distort the evidence it examines and thwart the objects it aims at.

In itself, however, the inquiry is primarily psychological in character and as such should appeal strongly to all students of human psychology. At the same time it has also a special interest for students of ethics, inasmuch as some of the questions asked seem to be well designed to throw light upon disputed ethical problems. For instance the questions as a whole will give us some definite idea of the relation between sentiment and belief, and so test the doctrine of the existence of a "will to believe" (or *disbelieve*) which moulds the beliefs actually entertained. Again the answers to Question II. should throw many side lights on the ethical questions as to the value of life.

Of course the results of the inquiry can only be representative and trustworthy if a large number of answers are collected, and I should like therefore to appeal to the readers of this journal to answer the *questionnaire* themselves and to collect answers from their friends. The work will be found extremely interesting as well as useful.

Copies of the *questionnaire* may be obtained from Dr. Hodgson or myself, and in *Europe answers should be returned to me, in America to Dr. Hodgson.*

F. C. S. SCHILLER.

There is a widespread literary tradition that men naturally desire a future life. From this assumed fact it has been variously argued that (1) such a universal desire cannot be destined to disappointment, and (2) it must vitiate convictions and engender illusory evidence in its own support.

But there is some reason to suppose, both from the ordinary conduct of men and from sporadic declarations of individuals, that this tradition is very far from accurately representing the facts, and that these are actually more various and complicated. Moreover, it should not be forgotten that in India the literary tradition seems to be exactly reversed, and it is assumed that men naturally crave for extinction or absorption in the Absolute.

It becomes a question, therefore, what the actual sentiments of men are, and what, consequently, is the actual bias with which they are likely to receive the doctrines and the evidence that bear on the subject.

Both these questions are capable of being determined with sufficient precision by instituting a statistical inquiry over a sufficiently wide field—collecting answers until it becomes evident that the percentages of the various types of answer have become constant.

To determine the nature of men's actual sentiments and actual bias should be a matter of great interest, not only to the S. P. R. and psychologists generally, but also to every religious organization. For both the scientific labors of the former and the moral exhortations of the latter are likely to be in some degree, at least, ineffectual, so long as they are conducted in ignorance, and so in disregard, of what men really want. It is only when the facts have been ascertained that they can be argued from for the various purposes of the scientist, the philosopher and the theologian.

First of all, therefore, it is necessary to discover the nature of human sentiment; and to obtain it in its purity, it is desirable to exclude, as far as possible, all extraneous influences, whether of a religious or of a scientific kind. It is, of course, recognized that these may and often do influence sentiment, that they may engender or check it, as also that there may be a marked divergence between conviction or belief and *sentiment*. But as it is primarily the nature of the *sentiment* which has to be determined, these other considerations should be excluded as far as possible.

Hence the subjoined questions should be understood as directly referring only to the personal preferences, sentiments or desires of those who answer them, quite irrespective of their religious faith or reasoned convictions, the influence of which, where it exists, may be recorded in answer to Question III.

Please return this questionnaire when answered to Richard Hodgson, 5 Boylston Place, Boston, Mass., or F. C. S. Schiller, Corpus Christi College, Oxford.

*N. B.—All names will be regarded as strictly confidential.*

#### QUESTIONS.

- I. Would you prefer (a) to live after "death" or (b) not?
- II. (a) If I. (a), do you desire a future life whatever the conditions might be?  
 (b) If not, what would have to be its character to make the prospect seem tolerable? Would you, *e. g.*, be content with a life more or less like your present life?  
 (c) Can you say what elements in life (if any) are felt by you to call for its perpetuity?
- III. Can you state *why* you feel in this way, as regards questions I. and II.?
- IV. Do you now feel the question of a future life to be of urgent importance to your mental comfort?
- V. Have your feelings on questions I., II. and IV. undergone change? If so, when and in what ways?

- VI. (a) Would you like to *know for certain* about the future life, or (b) would you prefer to leave it a *matter of faith*?

#### HINTS FOR COLLECTORS.

1. Answers should be collected by preference from educated adults.
2. Collectors should fill up their own papers first, and get the others answered *independently*.
3. Any answer, AFFIRMATIVE OR NEGATIVE, is valuable as a psychological fact.
4. Even a *refusal to answer* is a valuable indication of feeling, which it is important to record. In such case, the collector should, if possible, ask the reason of the refusal, and should then fill up a census paper with the name, etc., of the refuser, inserting the reason given for refusing under the head of *Remarks*.

The name, address, sex, age, nationality and profession of those who answer is also asked for.

---

#### BOOK REVIEWS.

ETHICAL DEMOCRACY: ESSAYS IN SOCIAL DYNAMICS. By Professor D. G. Ritchie, G. H. Perris, J. R. MacDonald, J. A. Hobson, Professor J. H. Muirhead, Zona Vallance, F. J. Gould, Margaret McMillan, Professor Adamson, Christian Collin, and Dr. Stanton Coit. Edited for the Society of Ethical Propagandists by Stanton Coit. London: Grant Richards, 9 Henrietta street, W. C., 1900.

The subject matter of this book is described in the Editorial Preface as "the relation of democracy to the process of evolution in history, to international coöperation, to industry, to the family, to woman as a social factor, to the moral instruction and education of children, to the philosophic habit among the people, to literature and art in general, and to the inner springs of human conduct. Each of these topics forms the subject of a special essay in this volume."

There are eleven essays, each one by a different writer. Great catholicity has been shown in the choice of the essayists. Each one holds a more or less different point of view from all his fellows, in philosophy, politics, and methods of social reform. For this and some other reasons, the book is more interesting as a revelation of the modes of thought, and of the aims and ideals of